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## OPINION OF FUTURE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ABOUT THE ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES COURSE

Aušra Stepanovienė<sup>1</sup>

*<sup>1</sup>Mykolas Romeris University Public Security Academy Department of Humanities  
Putvinskis st.70, LT-44211 Kaunas  
Telephone (+37037) 303669  
E-mail: ausrastep@mruni.eu*

Rasa Dobržinskienė<sup>2</sup>

*<sup>2</sup>Mykolas Romeris University Public Security Academy Department of Humanities  
Putvinskis st.70, LT-44211 Kaunas  
Telephone (+370 37) 303669  
E-mail: rasa.dobrzinskiene@mruni.eu*

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**Summary.** The aim of the paper is to describe difficulties that can be faced by students learning terminology of English peculiar to their professional field, or, in other words, English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Before the research the assumption was made that students are generally not prepared for the course regarding their basic English skills needed for communication. Thus, the research was supposed to confirm or deny the hypothesis. The survey of first-year students at Public Security Academy of Mykolas Romeris University was conducted to find out students' level of preparation and opinion about the usefulness of ESP course. The paper is completed with recommendations for teachers how to organize ESP teaching successfully.

**Keywords:** ESP, difficulties, legal terminology, preparation.

### INTRODUCTION

English for specific purposes (ESP) is the field of teaching English, which focuses on awareness of certain needs. In addition, all decisions as far as course content and teaching methods are concerned are made regarding students' needs and reasons which lead him/her to studying the language.

Being a native speaker or a professional with perfect academic skills does not necessarily mean that one will be expert in ESP as it is a completely different field of a language. ESP develops students' ability to communicate in English in their professional surroundings. Thus, specialized knowledge of the area is required.

ESP as the method of teaching a foreign language is aimed at needs of a specific learner. Hutchinson and Waters<sup>1</sup> claim that the primary goal of ESP teachers is to design specific curricula for distinct groups of learners. In this way, learners of ESP develop their

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<sup>1</sup>Hutchinson, T., Waters, A. (1987). English for Specific purposes: a learning entered approach. Cambridge University Press.

communicative competence and are able to use the foreign language not only for everyday communication in real life situations but also for cooperation with their partners from abroad that belong to the same professional area. In short, one must emphasize the specific nature of learning/teaching ESP as it is directly linked to particular learners' needs.

Mykolas Romeris University was established in 2004. It provides education in the field of law. Thus, teaching of English is organized with orientation to needs of future law specialists. Public Security Academy provides the opportunity to study different programmes, namely Law and Police Activities, Law and Pre-trial Process as well as Law and State Border Guard. Consequently, students of the aforementioned programmes learn ESP related to the fields they study. Innovative and creative teachers of ESP are constantly involved in developing and applying appropriate methods and teaching aids regarding students' specialization. Thus, the paper aims at describing students experiences when studying ESP and its peculiarities as far as vocabulary is concerned.

Analysis of scientific literature, a questionnaire, observation and data analysis were applied in the paper.

The objectives of the research are as follows a) to reveal purposefulness of students' needs analysis and its importance within the context of teaching ESP b) to show students' level of preparation to learn ESP c) to find out students' attitude towards ESP learning.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

One learns ESP having specific expectations and aims in order to gain linguistic competence in certain fields and, thus, it is apparent that analysis of one's needs is primary and probably the most important step in developing or renewing ESP curricula. Success subsequently depends on identification of the aims and needs. Moreover, the curriculum of ESP is basically short-termed and, therefore, it is essential to learn what a student might really encounter in his/her professional area. Analysis of needs helps select and make priorities. Consequently, the primary aim of ESP curriculum designer is to find out learners' needs and orient the course towards satisfaction of the expectations. Thus, analysis of needs is an inseparable and crucial part of ESP teaching.

"In general, the need is defined as the gap or huge discrepancy between the existing situation and the desired one in the future"<sup>2</sup> whereas analysis of needs is a process which seeks

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<sup>2</sup> Berwick, R. (1989). Needs assessment in language programming: from theory to practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.52.

to systematically examine the current and aspired situation. As far as learning/teaching is concerned, analysis of needs means collection of information, on the basis of which it is possible to design the curriculum conforming to requirements of certain students' group.<sup>3</sup> Having identified the needs, it is easier to formulate aims and objectives as well as select the learning content, choose and adapt teaching aids, methods and strategies, ways of assessment, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Tony Dudley-Evans and Maggie Jo St. John<sup>5</sup> are significant contributors to the development of ESP. In their opinion, ESP is a sub-part of the whole English teaching process. Its aim is to prepare learners of ESP to fulfil their professional role successfully in the English language regarding the specific nature of one's job and it implies communication. Robinson<sup>6</sup> is another representative of ESP, who focuses on the analysis of needs and describes ESP as "goal directed". It means that ESP learning derives from the above mentioned analysis of needs, which in turn defines precisely the nature of tasks and activities that students have to undertake to reach specific goals in their professional environment.

In Lithuania the research into needs analysis within the field of ESP is not numerous. J. Petruševičius and R. Jocaitė (2005) have conducted the analysis of the current situation in Šiauliai University while G. Laugalienė and A. Riley (2006) have investigated ESP needs of Lithuanian War Academy Cadets. A. Janulienė (2004) analysed students' satisfaction with studies of the professional foreign language. A. Liuolienė and R. Metiūnienė (2006) investigated peculiarities of ESP motifs and emphasized the importance of needs analysis when developing curricula. They also introduced the dominating trends of needs analysis. E. Bartnikaitė and V. Bijeikienė (2017) examined the needs and problems regarding the use of general and legal English faced by law practitioners. V. Prancevičiūtė and Z. Zajankauskaitė (2012) surveyed how the ESP approach to English language teaching meets the students' needs and how the students' needs can be employed for the adjustment of the ESP course with regard to students' evaluation of their needs.

Future law enforcement officers of the Academy of Public Security are studying English in relation to law enforcement, which has been the field of ESP not widely researched so far.

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<sup>3</sup> Iwai, T., Kondo, K., Limm, S.J. (1999). Japanese language needs analysis. Available at: <http://www.nfrc.hawaii.edu/Networks/NWB.pdf> [accessed 31 March 2018].

<sup>4</sup> Kavaliauskienė, G., Anusienė, L., Kaminskienė, L. (2007). Challenges for ESP learners: alternative assessment of performance and usefulness of class activities. *Socialinis darbas*, Nr. 6(1)

<sup>5</sup> Dudley-Evans, T., Maggie, J. (1998). *Developments in English for Specific Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>6</sup> Robinson, P. (1991). *ESP today*. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall International.

Moreover, it is characterized by complicated vocabulary. Thus, in order to improve the high quality course of the English language in the field of law which conforms to students' needs and expectations and simultaneously organize its efficient teaching, the research into students' needs is required, which could reveal learners' preparedness for the course and what difficulties they face when studying specific terminology of law.

On the basis of literature review and the hypotheses concerning difficulties that ESP learners may face a questionnaire for the interview with students of ESP was designed. The aim of the research was to collect the data regarding ESP learners' experiences.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was a four-month period from the beginning of September 2017 to the end of December 2017. A total of 83 first year students of Mykolas Romeris University, Public Security Academy participated in the research. The interviewed learners, majoring in law and pre-trial process were chosen randomly and all of them were involved in the ESP course. The purpose was to collect from research participants as much data as possible concerning the difficulties that students face in ESP course.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND THEIR ANALYSIS**

The aim of the research was to find out students' attitude towards studying ESP and their level of preparation for the course. First year ESP students of Mykolas Romeris University, Academy of Public Security, were selected to be the respondents of the research.

The questionnaire including learners' attitude towards studying ESP was used for the research. The respondents had to answer several questions, five of which were asking to provide the answer and indicate the degree on the scale, namely *Completely*, *Not at all*, and *Partly*.

The table of the questionnaire clearly shows that 47 % of the learners have enough knowledge of English in order to successfully study ESP (completely according to the questionnaire) whereas 42 % of the students state that their knowledge is sufficient partly. In other words, most of the students claim that they are prepared and feel confident about learning ESP. In addition, it does not seem very challenging or demanding for them. However, 11 % believe they are going to face certain difficulties when learning ESP and this can cause complicated learning situations for both students and teachers.

**Table 1.** Students' Answers Concerning Learning ESP(%)

Questions	Completely	Not at all	Partly
1. Do you have sufficient knowledge of a foreign language to learn ESP?	47	11	42
2. Can you understand the content of ESP course?	66	13	21
3. Do you understand ESP terminology of your professional field?	50	4	46
4. Can you discuss about different issues related to your profession?	28	14	58
5. Does the content of ESP course satisfy your learning needs and expectations?	45	14	41

As far as the second question is concerned, 66 % of the learners claim they can understand the content of the course while 21 % state that it is clear for them only in part and the rest 13 % indicate that the content of ESP course seems vague for them. In other words, they do not understand it at all. Thus, less than a half of the respondents highlight the difficulty understanding the content of the course. This finding can be based on the curriculum design as ESP is introduced only in the second term, which in turn means that the students are not content-prepared yet for studies of ESP.

The findings of the research indicate that 50 % of the respondents, which means half of them, can understand ESP terminology, including typical collocations whereas 46 % claim they can understand it in part. The rest 4 % say they do not understand it at all. As it has been mentioned above, ESP course is introduced only in the second term, which means that students have not gained sufficient theoretical grounds of the subjects in the field and it may aggravate the process of studying ESP. On the other hand, this obstacle can be overcome by consulting teachers of specific subjects.

28 % of the respondents indicated their ability to discuss on the issues of their profession. 58 % can do it in part whereas 14 % are unable to discuss the topics of their specialization. The results are not satisfying as they reveal the respondents being unable to develop a discussion in their professional field and this in turn aggravates the process of learning ESP. In addition, one should take into consideration 46 % of the respondents who claim that they may face difficulties

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understanding ESP terminology. Above all, the conclusion can be drawn that ESP course might be complicated for second year students.

Finally, 45 % of the respondents state that their learning needs are satisfied by ESP course content. On the other hand, 14 % of the respondents believe that the content does not meet their expectations while the rest 41 % claim it satisfying in part. These findings are significant regarding the aim of the ESP course, which is to satisfy needs of particular learners. This should be done by analyzing certain factors such as the level and skills of the English language, the depth and volume of professional knowledge as well as the objectives that individual learners set before undertaking the course.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Students are more motivated to learn a subject, including ESP course, when they find the information they are introduced to personally meaningful. This definitely includes their present and future professional activity. Therefore, ESP teachers should primarily find out what individual learner's needs are before designing the course and selecting the teaching content and aids.

The reasons explaining why students' needs and expectations are not met by the content of ESP course could be analysed in more detail. The findings reveal that 47 % of the respondents, which is almost half, have sufficient basic knowledge to undertake the ESP course whereas the rest half of the respondents, which is 53 % claim being not prepared for the course yet. More than a half (66 %) can understand legal issues included in the course content. Nevertheless, one third of the students remains being unaware of the topics discussed. Another problem is insufficient knowledge of ESP terminology as it was stated by 50 % of the respondents. 28% of the respondents feel they can discuss the issues related to their profession while 58 % can do it in part, with 14 % being unable to participate in the conversation covering their profession-related topics at all. Last but not least, 41 % of the respondents feel the ESP course only in part satisfies their needs and expectations.

So as to deal with the problems mentioned above, teachers bear huge responsibility selecting appropriate assignments for their students and adjusting them to learners' needs. Furthermore, close integration of subject teachers is crucial.

The aim of the research was to analyse difficulties and challenges that one may face when learning ESP. However, certain recommendations could be provided for subsequent investigations regarding overcoming the obstacles to be faced:

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ESP teachers are supposed to keep close contacts with teachers of professional subjects at the same university.

ESP teachers should encourage their students to analyse the content of the ESP course with teachers of different subjects for better awareness of the professional issues.

ESP course should be designed by incorporating a wide range of methods and approaches, based on skill training and topic development in order to satisfy expectations and needs of different learners.

The problem is how to meet the needs of mixed ability students. There should be remedial learning tools for weaker students.

The course is attended in the first year of the Bachelor degree when students have no knowledge of their national law. They have no awareness of differences between legal systems as well as are unfamiliar with court and legal procedures. It would be more reasonable to transfer the ESP course to the middle of the law degree programme.

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**Aušra Stepanovienė<sup>1</sup>**. Mykolas Romeris University, Academy of Public Security, Department of Humanities, lecturer. Research interests: professional English methodology and didactics, theory and practice of legal English translation.

**Rasa Dobržinskienė<sup>2</sup>**, PhD, Mykolas Romeris University, Academy of Public Security, Department of Humanities, lecturer. Research interests: culture of language, professional language, pragmatic linguistics, language of advertisements and commercials